



Paper Design Workshop

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Course instructors

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Course description

Academic conversations mainly progress through paper publications in academic journals – in short, these conversations depict how we, as academics, try to explain the world (i.e., how we *theorize* it). Accordingly, as academics, a key goal we have is to make substantive contributions to conversations through publications.

In that context, it is important to understand that not all papers and all journals are the same. Academic conversations are often led by publications in so-called top journals. That does not mean that all papers in top journals are good, or that papers published outside those journals are bad – however, given how we all have limited time (and, hence, often focus our *reading time* on top journals), publications in top journals carry more status and, in the logic of a self-fulfilling prophecy, that should attract better paper submissions, a stricter reviewing process, and, hence, higher quality *on average*.

Accordingly, a key question that follows to junior researchers who strive to make such visible contributions to science (and toward a successful academic career) is how to go about designing and writing top publications.

Goal

The goal of this course is to help (in particular) junior scholars in the field of management increase their odds of publishing in a top journal. What does “management” mean? It means that you are working in an area represented by the Academy of Management. In turn, for that area, top journal usually implies *primarily* the “Top 6” (AMJ, AMR, ASQ, ManSci, OrgSci, SMJ) as well as leading journals in other disciplines (e.g., AJS, ASR, MISQ, Nature, Science...), and, though to a slightly lesser degree, top field journals (such as Research Policy for Innovation, Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice for Entrepreneurship, the Journal of Applied Psychology in Leadership, etc. – very often, those journals would also be part of the “FT 50” – a list of 50 strong management journals listed by the Financial Times). Hence, we will focus on what the requirements for publications in these journals are. Usually, this boils down primarily to one thing: how can I make a “theoretical contribution?”

Target audience, capacity, and selection criteria

We cordially invite applications from doctoral students and post-docs who strive to publish in the leading journals of our discipline and their field. To take the most out of this course, we highly recommend you bring a working paper draft. For scholars earlier in their career, at the very least, you will need a somewhat developed research idea that you will refine into some form of paper draft or project proposal during the course.

Given this course will be highly interactive and feature intense, personal coaching, seating will be limited to 6-8 people. In case we should receive more applications than we have seats, preference will be given to candidates



working in areas, in which we have expertise (roughly speaking: firm-level qualitative, quantitative, or conceptual papers fitting into the TIM, STR, OMT, or ENT divisions of the Academy of Management; no modelling or simulation; economics only as it fits the above journals); and individuals who have received prior training in theory, theorizing, methodology, the philosophy of science, and/or academic writing. If otherwise equally qualified, we will prioritize doctoral students if accepted to the Research Excellence Program.

Application process

Please submit to o.alexu@tum.de by **15.11.2020**: a cover letter, a full, up-to-date academic resume, the paper or paper idea you would like to bring into this course including any review(s) you may have potentially received on the paper previously. In your cover letter (no longer than 3 pages), please specify (1) the topic and state of your doctoral thesis, (2) why and how you think that taking this specific course will help you become a better scholar, (3) what scholar you would like to become, (4) the history of your paper (where does it come from, where has it been), and your goals for the paper (where do you want to submit it, when, and why), and (5) why you think this paper can make a contribution to academia, what that contribution is, and who would care.

Please note that no feedback can be provided on applications that are turned down.

Course aims

What this course is

In this course, we want to enable junior scholars who have the ambition and initial training to become excellent researchers to take the next step and prepare them to engage with the brightest of their peers through publication in the leading journals of our discipline: general management. In doing so, we want to enable you not just to make contributions to their fields of study, but to participate in actively *shaping the discourse*, which is led first and foremost by the conversations going on in those journals.

Accordingly, in this course, we will focus on five things. First, we will think about how you can organize yourself to be most productive. Second, we will re-establish what good and bad theory are, and what means to make a contribution, and look into the process by which these are produced via academic journals. Third, we will look at how you enter this process through positioning, framing, and writing your ideas, and how you can design research projects with such considerations already in mind. Fourth, in 1:1 conversations, you will receive specific individual feedback on your research ideas and career plans. Finally, we will have students partake on a smaller scale in this discourse by presenting and discussing their work.

What this course is not

- An “introduction to [my theory] class” – if you do not know the key theories in your field and/or have never heard the term “contribution,” you might benefit more from other courses at this point.
- A “please fix my paper” course – while we will be generous with our feedback (and demand absolutely nothing in return), we are usually not experts in your domain, meaning there is only so much we can do
- A listening-only class – while all the heavy-lifting will be done by you, it will be fun and worth your time.

Course objectives

Knowledge Objectives

In this course, we strive to help you see what it takes to make a meaningful contribution that advances management scholarship broadly. In doing so, you should not only master your understanding of what “theory”



and “contribution” are, but develop a clearer picture of the process by which they are created and evaluated.

Skills Objectives

- Improve diagnostic, analytical, and verbal skills via class and group discussions
- Enhance critical thinking and interpretation skills
- Build up or improve writing, reviewing, and review(er)-management skills

Learning Objectives

At the end of this course, students will be able to demonstrate understanding, critical assessment and application of the following:

- How to plan (parts of) your academic career – at least, how to approach your dissertation
- How to clearly convey that an idea is interesting, to the right audience, in the right journal
- How to take the initial steps in navigating the journal submission process
 - *Note: for the next steps, see the course on reviewing by Prof. Jens Förderer*

Preliminary schedule

All course session will take place **ONLINE** via Zoom from 8:30am to about 3:00pm – a link will be provided later. Below are the topics and some guiding questions for the sessions – given we will work interactively, it is possible that we will shift topics between sessions, add additional ones, and/or skip some.

Session	Date	Topic
1	27.11.20	<i>How can you organize to make a good contribution? (workshop/course)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why are you doing a doctoral degree? - How could you set up your efforts at achieving the degree? - What is the contribution that you want to make? - Who determines (and how) what makes a good contribution?
2	11.12.20	<i>What makes a good contribution? (workshop/course)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is good & bad theory, again? - What do you think makes your paper (idea) interesting? - What is a contribution, and what would be yours??
3	29.01.21	<i>How do you actually make a good contribution? (workshop/course)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do I frame a paper? - How do I write a paper? - How do I set up empirical projects to achieve a contribution?
By individual appointment		<i>Are you on the right track? (1:1 feedback session)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How could you facilitate your academic career? - How can you make your paper even better? - What is the story you want to tell more generally?
4	05.03.21	<i>How am I doing for a contribution so far? (presentation day)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do people get the contribution you want to make? - Do people believe I can make this contribution?

On day 1, we will begin with you introducing what you are doing or planning to do, and link it to a recap of how management scholarship is organized, broadly, including the role and ambition of journals, the publication process, and academic careers. Our focus will be on finding out how you could organize yourself in the short



run to effectively tackle your PhD journey

On day 2, we will revisit in-depth about what theory is, what makes for a strong theoretical contribution, and whether you are currently set up to make a strong contribution.

On day 3, we will go into detail to look into how each part of a paper plays a role in facilitating your intended contribution. We will also use this lens to discuss various research methods, and how to design research projects to maximize your chance at making a contribution from the start.

My expectation is that you are continuously working on a paper, project proposal, or extended abstract throughout the first three sessions (and in the times in-between; it is your Ph.D., after all!). In turn, armed with your ideas and questions, we will have a 1:1 meeting of up to two hours. In this meeting, we can discuss your doctoral dissertation, a paper project, revision plan, academic career ambitions, etc.

On day 4, each participant will have the opportunity to present their paper (proposal). All participants are expected to have read everyone else's work in order to provide rich and meaningful feedback. Presentation & question time per presenter will be determined conditional upon the number of course participants (i.e., in the range of 30-45 minutes). We will round up the day with some general observations and insights, and final Q&A.

Core readings

Ideally, you have already seen all of these works, repeatedly, in previous courses. In any case, we expect that you have diligently studied the following texts **before** the respective session of class **and** that you can respond to questions on those readings (i.e., skimming these texts will likely not be enough). All texts will be on Moodle.

Day 1: How can you organize to make a good contribution?

- Huff, A.S., 1999. Writing for scholarly publication. Sage

Day 2: What makes a good contribution?

- Davis, M. 1971. That's interesting! *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 1: 309-344; thereof, you may skip/skim only pp. 313 (bottom)-326; pp. 334 (bottom)-336 (top); pp. 338 (middle)-end.
- Sutton, R. & Staw, B. 1995. What theory is not. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40: 371-384.
- Weick, K. 1995. What theory is not, theorizing is. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40: 385-390.
- DiMaggio, P. 1995. Comments on "what theory is not." *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40: 391-397.
- Bettis, R. A., Ethiraj, S., Gambardella, A., Helfat, C., & Mitchell, W. 2016. Creating repeatable cumulative knowledge in strategic management. *Strategic Management Journal*, 37(2): 257-261.

Day 3: How do you actually make a good contribution?

Academy of Management Journal – From the Editors Series

- Colquitt, J.A. and George, G. (2011). Publishing in AMJ Part 1: Topic Choice, *Academy of Management Journal* 2011, Vol. 54, No. 3, 432-435.
- Bono, J.E. and McNamara, G. (2011). Publishing in AMJ —Part 2: Research Design, *Academy of Management Journal* 2011, Vol. 54, No. 4, 657-660.
- Grant, A.M. and Pollock, T.G. (2011). Publishing in AMJ — Part 3: Setting the Hook, *Academy of Management Journal* 2011, Vol. 54, No. 5, 873-879.
- Sparrowe, R.T. and Mayer, K.J. (2011). Publishing in AMJ — Part 4: Grounding Hypotheses, *Academy of Management Journal* 2011, Vol. 54, No. 6, 1098-1102.



- Zhang, Y.A. and Shaw, J.D. (2011). Publishing in AMJ — Part 5: Crafting the Methods and Results, *Academy of Management Journal* 2012, Vol. 55, No. 1, 8–12.
- Geletkanycz, M. and Corley, K. (2011). Publishing in AMJ – Part 6: Discussing the Implications, *Academy of Management Journal* 2012, Vol. 55, No. 2, 256–260.
- Bansal, P.T. and Corley, K. (2011). Publishing in AMJ — Part 7: What’s Different about Qualitative Research?, *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 55, No. 3, 509-513.
- George, G. 2012. Publishing in AMJ for non-U.S. Authors. *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 55, No. 5, 1023-1026.

Ezra Zuckerman’s tips on article writing

- Tips to Article-Writers."http://mitsloan.mit.edu/shared/ods/documents/?DocumentID=4448
- On Genre: A Few More Tips to Article-Writers.
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/a3n1ux6lnu7wbpe/On%20Genre.pdf?dl=1>

Other editorials

- Barney, J. 2018. Editor’s comments: Positioning a theory paper for publication. *Academy of Management Review*, 43(3): 345-348.

Course procedures

Have Fun

Contributing new theoretical insights to the academic debate *is the very core of our profession*. In turn, our goal is to equip you with some of the core skills that are necessary to do so. Applying principles of academic inquiry, rigorously and in the right context, is what any scholar *wants* to do! Accordingly, this course will be a great opportunity for you to test whether and how much you would enjoy this core aspect of our profession.

Prepare and Participate Actively

To make this class a success for everyone, we need you to prepare for class and participate in *every session*. We highly recommend that you prepare notes in sufficient detail to enable your regular participation in the discussion. You are encouraged to prepare for class with your colleagues, however, each member of the class should be fully conversant in the material. For example, you should be able to outline the topic that each reading addresses, describe its core points, and explain how it links to what you know, what you have learnt in other PhD classes, and to your paper. If need be, cold-calling will be drawn upon.

Give feedback

Your feedback – in class or in private – on any aspect of this course is welcome at any time. It can help make this course an excellent experience for you and for us. We encourage you to contact us via email and we will respond as soon as possible (usually within the same day the email is received). If you wish to meet with one of us, please let us know in advance (including your questions) so that we can prepare. Come prepared.

Assessment

For participants, the course will be worth at least 4 ECTS, and feature at least 22.5 presence hours.

Given the completely interactive nature of this course, attendance and participation are mandatory, and not properly excused absence or poor preparation may likely lead to your being excluded from the course.

Note how you will be pass-fail graded on this course based on SIX elements, *all of which* you need to pass:

- Your course participation. This implies in particular your comments (quality!) to other participants and



- your ability to give meaningful and internally consistent responses to my questions
- Your “homework” for Day 3:
 - o Submit to me, at least two days before class, up to four academic papers containing
 - an introduction you REALLY like
 - an introduction you REALLY dislike
 - an argument (i.e., a part of the theory section) you REALLY like
 - an argument (i.e., a part of the theory section) you REALLY dislike
 - o ... plus a short accompanying note specifying (briefly) what it is precisely you (dislike)
 - Your “homework” for the 1:1 feedback session
 - o Update your cover letter and send it to me a day before our meeting. Details to follow in class
 - Your “homework” for Day 4
 - o Submit to me, at least eight days before Day 4, your paper (idea)
 - o Submit to me, at least one day before Day 4, a presentation of your paper (idea). Details to follow in class
 - Your overall progress, as evidenced by improvements of the paper (idea) you submitted with your application to an updated version, which you will have to submit three weeks (sharp) after Day 4. If you want to make sure that I understand what you updated, feel free to attach an accompanying letter explaining your updates (and, possibly, to lay out why you updated some parts, but not others).
 - A two-page (maximum!) summary of your one key learning in this course, to be submitted with your updated paper (i.e., also on March 26 at the latest)